

JUNE, 1955 /25

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# Integrity

the parish



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**INTEGRITY IS PUBLISHED BY LAY CATHOLICS  
AND DEVOTED TO THE INTEGRATION OF RELIGION  
AND LIFE FOR OUR TIMES.**

Published monthly by Integrity Publishing Co., Inc.,  
157 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y., MU-5-8125.

Edited by Dorothy Dohen.

Re-entered as Second Class Matter May 11, 1950 at the  
Post Office in New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

All single copies 25¢ each; yearly subscription: Domestic \$3.00,

Canadian \$3.50, Foreign \$4.00.

There are probably as many ways of looking at the parish as there are parishioners. And we publish our issue on the parish with diffidence, realizing full well that there are doubtless many parochial problems we have overlooked and many potentialities in the existing parish we have neglected to mention.

Perhaps our readers will be surprised that the issue isn't more "radical" in advocating sweeping changes. Why, for instance, haven't we talked about dividing the gigantic urban parish into humanly-controllable sections? Or, why haven't we mentioned anything about abolishing the system of permanent pastors? These are two of the changes that are suggested whenever zealous parochial reformers get together.

The omission of any specific pattern for changing the parochial system has been intentional. Swapping plans for "ideal parishes of the future" is a luxury our writers have denied themselves. Such plans—if they are to have any validity—depend on a wide background of knowledge and experience of the life of the parish. Institutional changes, if they are not to be premature and wasteful, need to come as the result of organic growth. When they are entered into hastily the results are disastrous. Old roots have been destroyed, new roots do not come into spontaneous being.

The advocates of advanced institutional changes often overlook the fact that the new institutions they suggest require as a necessity a perfection on the part of the participating individuals which the old forms allowed them to escape. This is clearly illustrated in the case of the priest-workers, or in the new lay organizations such as the Legion of Mary and the YCW, where much more depends on the individual members than in a traditional Church society whose function is to play cards and raise money.

The article on co-existence is not unrelated to the rest of this issue. On the contrary, the parish has to be seen against the background of the total crisis of our time. For it is a paradox that urges itself on the contemporary parish that while it is the only existing social entity that can possibly provide the sense of community modern man needs (the sense of being known and loved, of being at home with others, of sinking roots where one belongs), it can fulfill this function only if it successfully escapes the evils of parochialism. To the extent that a parish is closed in on itself, that it is not open to the needs of the whole diocese, to the problems of the whole world, so does it fail to understand the needs of the modern man, who, in his individual restlessness, reflects the universal crisis.



## from our readers

### "on the divorce issue"

To the Editor:

I have read your issue on divorce with great interest. . . .

There is too much demanding and not enough asking, pleading, begging in most marriages. Where a coaxing, gentle request would bring a glad response, a harsh order can only be obeyed with a rebellious heart. It is pride and shyness, I think, that makes it hard for a married partner to maintain a civility he would find self-evident in any other relationship.

Why do husbands and wives close themselves to each other? I think it comes from sensitivity. They see each other so much, are so delivered to each other's moods, they are afraid of being hurt, and so, like the plant *touch-me-not* they close. It takes heroism to remain open and accept the wounds from another's personality, but it is the only Christian way.

Over the years small hurts become accumulated, especially with those people who do not react immediately. Resentment piles up—it is like a dangerous storage of gasoline, one day a spark can bring an explosion. I know only one way to prevent this. It is no use denying that our partner is unjust sometimes, thoughtless, selfish, cold. Being human, he undoubtedly is, sometimes. Instead of chalking this up against him, we should pause for a moment and think of whether we have not committed the very same fault with God, and whether we would like Him to hold it against us. I have never yet had occasion to believe that I had *not* committed that fault with God. If my husband took my efforts for granted, how much more did I take God's loving care for granted. Had my husband neglected me? How much more did I neglect God. Did he see only his own viewpoint? But when had I ever seen things God's way? Did he seem cold? But where was my fervour with God? It is an effective remedy against any consciously built up resentment.

We are not quick enough to hope all things and believe all things. When a husband or wife shows a wish to reform, we are inclined to be sceptical, we do not meet him halfway. We are again defending ourselves against a possible disappointment instead of smoothing the way for one whose soul is our most important duty.

We think too much of the pleasure of loving. Thanks be to God it often is very pleasant indeed. Religion can also be ecstatically blissful. Yet many saints have suffered from "dryness" and did not love less on that account. Love can be suffering, love can go against the grain, love can finally be reduced to a bare act of the will—the desire

to remain loyal and true to the marriage vow and serve our partner to the best of our ability in a cold damp fog of dislike. We must not then lose hope or think we don't love. We may be exercising a more pure form of love than in our honeymoon. And fogs clear up, the sun breaks out again and is the more radiant in contrast. And even if the sun never breaks out, we can warm ourselves on the thought that we are pleasing God.

We put our own ideal of marriage too much in the foreground, without reflecting on what may be God's ideal. We think mostly of our own happiness and little of God's glory. We do not reflect that it is often the defects in our partner that provide the necessary scouring to smooth off our own angularities. If we had the blissful marriage we want, with the perfectly loving and understanding partner, we would sink into a natural heaven and make no effort to grow closer to God. I think it is the most difficult marriage that gives most glory to God when adhered to faithfully. Self-pity is another wrecker of marriages. It is so easy to have an immense amount of sympathy with ourselves. I think sufferers of this disease should give themselves the penance of thinking every morning for half an hour of all the reasons why their partner should be pitied. If they are just in this they should be cured.

Monks and nuns know that the hardest thing to give up is our own judgment. It is easier to part with our possessions or even our relatives. Yet in marriage it is essential that one partner should give in when there is disagreement, and it should not always be the same one. Giving up one's opinion can become a joy when we mentally do it for God, trusting to Him to make all things right. It is my experience that He does so most marvellously, most lovingly, and that way our trust in Him is strengthened.

I think love should know no pride. I think we should be ready to be door mats to our partner if it is for the sake of his happiness. But never, of course, in a slavish way, never from fear or from habit. Only for the love of God. Nothing can lower us if we do it for the love of God. In marriage motive counts more than anything.

Another great danger to marriage is to imagine we could have been happier with somebody else. There is no way of knowing this. We would still have our own faults and we cannot foresee what kind of effect they would have had on the other person. There is no happiness for anyone outside of the will of God, and something that did not happen can't have been the will of God. The devil tries to whisper to us that a greater happiness might have been possible, which we have never known. We cannot possibly know all the happiness God has created, it would kill us. It is like trying to wear all the garments at a sale. We must be content with what God sends us.



Patience is a great virtue. There is a great deal of love in it, as mothers of small children know. Marriage calls for a lot of patience. It's a long-drawn-out-affair and it seems to have no climax, it just peters out in senility.

Watch and wait, said our Lord on many occasions. It is very necessary to watch and wait in marriage. Don't for God's own loving sake let an opportunity slip by to make your partner happier or better. Don't think any little attention too small, don't feel you're above showing your affection. I've greatly sinned in that respect.

Marriage is called a yoke. Two people tied to the same burden must want to go the same way or there is trouble. It is better to go where you don't want to go than to stop dead in your tracks.

Don't ever think you've outgrown romance. To outgrow romance is to lose life. We should try to respond to our partner's romantic and sentimental moods. It is as cruel to refuse him those as it is to refuse to feed him. There again I think it is pride or fear of disappointment that makes people reluctant to surrender to a soft mood in their partner. Sometimes they want so much that they won't take what he can give. All this is selfishness; it's not thinking of your partner.

I don't think we realize enough how diffident husbands and wives can get as the years roll on, and they feel themselves getting less attractive. There they sit, the poor frumps, he with balding head and she with greying hair, chumping their false teeth and longing for affection. Do they give it to each other? Oh, no. They fancy that at their state in life love is finished. Or they remember a quarrel in the past and indulge in an orgy of "nobody-loves-me." Or they just sit helplessly, like swaddled infants. I know few people who fail to respond to affection. If I were the female with the greying hair, I should know that now was the time for a little petting, kind words, admiration. Declarations of love should not all be heaped at the beginning of marriage, like currants in a badly made currant cake; they should be evenly spread. And if the balding individual merely grunts in response and fails to act the Galahad, the act of love will not be wasted. It has a way of warming the person who makes it, and others around as well.

...Often have I gone to church in the hope of enlisting God's sympathy against my husband only to be gently shown my own faults. And I think that unless He does that we are not really in touch with Him at all. It is frightening how isolated we can be in our own ego, veritable prisoners. God is our only hope of escape—escape from our egoism and self-seeking, our sloth and self-will and obstinacy, our rebellious angers, lustful vagaries, cold pride, resentment, stony hearts, and everywhere our chasing of self, self, self, like a dog his tail. . . .

*A Wife, Paris, France*



Peter Canon

## the american parish

*Father Canon examines the urban parish and discusses the historical and theological developments that have made it what it is today. His article is not a blueprint for reform, but a presentation of those factors that must be understood before any effective changes can be undertaken.*

In a modern city parish many people do not find what they are looking for. Many of those who are dissatisfied never voice their disappointment; many do not even realize they are disappointed. Some put the blame for their dissatisfaction on the pastor, the bishop or the trustees of the Church. The pastor again and his assistants, if ever they become conscious of their people's criticism, put the blame on their parishioners' unreasonable requests or ungenerous help.

Do people look to their parish for things the parish could not offer or does the modern city parish fundamentally not offer what it should?

More practical inquiries might be directed toward the study of methods. Here we ask the more fundamental "what" should be offered and leave the "how" to other articles.

Take Jose, I met him one Sunday when, during the eleven o'clock high Mass, I went out through the main door of our Church. There I



saw him among five dark-haired and bronze-skinned people. From far away you could have guessed their origin, the origin of 37% of the baptized Catholics in New York City, Puerto Rico. Why had they come to Church and then remained outside? Had they gone in or were they waiting for the next Mass? They were all standing in a little group and talking lethargically. I went up to them and said "que tal" which means "Hi," and slowly they turned around, looking at me. After a few more words their eyes began to sparkle. Before they had been completely unrelated to the surroundings: their dresses were almost imperceptibly differently cut from those of the other parishioners, their language was different and while the others were in Church they were outside. Now suddenly, through a few Spanish words they seemed related to their surroundings. They started to speak: they all came from Moca, a little place in the hills of that beautiful island; they had arrived here in New York just a few weeks ago. They had found out where the Church was, and when they looked at it they would not believe that it was a Catholic Church: a Church had to be in the middle of a plaza, in the middle of the village, the center of a community. Here they had found a building with strange pointed arches in the middle of two tall houses right on a booming street.

The Church inside was dark, with light strangely colored from stained-glass windows, instead of the simple, whitewashed structure—with wide openings for windows to let in as much air as possible—that they were used to. But they had recognized this as a Catholic Church, because, upon an inspection, they had found the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help on one of the altars, and that much they knew, where that picture was, there had to be Our Lord. They had discovered the picture on a weekday evening, and now on Sunday they had come back to the Church, they had wanted to go to Mass. Now why did they not go in and follow Mass? I asked them, and got an answer which baffled me. They said, because of the ushers. They had never been accompanied to a pew by an usher. Oftentimes they had no pews in Church. Here they saw parishioners paying their way into Church. They didn't realize that these people—or their parents—had built this Church by themselves, that they now felt responsible for its support and maintenance, that it was not like Puerto Rico where the government had built churches until the Americans arrived. So they had turned away from Church because of the ushers, as one of them said; because Mass starts so much on time, the other said. Our Lady was there, they said—but the warmth and the life of the people seemed lacking.



I could not help thinking back to Puerto Rico; my first Sunday there in a big parish, in the mountains. On Saturday the pastor asked me to say Mass the next day in the mountains, in three different mission chapels (he had twelve altogether), since he would have to say the Masses in the main village. If there was a priest around to help out, every four weeks Mass was said on Sunday in every chapel. The first Mass I said at about six in the morning, after I had slept all night on the altar steps of the chapel, then I traveled on, by horseback, to the next chapel. I heard confessions, said Mass, baptized, married . . . and off I went to the third chapel, on horseback still, where I arrived after noon. People were sitting around in Church eating their bananas and chewing cane, and on the Church steps they had lighted a little fire to cook something. They continued their conversation in Church while I heard confessions; for Mass everybody was silent and most of them knelt on the crude floor while two lonely dogs ran around among them, and when I started to baptize the conversation resumed. In the evening, I was amazed at the answer I got from the pastor, a Puerto Rican trained in a United States seminary, to my question as to whether he thought this behavior slightly disrespectful: Our people believe that God is their Father, and they want to behave in Church as they behave in their Father's house. There are no ushers in Jose's Father's house. Dinner does not start on time, probably he has no watch, he goes to Church when everybody else goes to Church. Mass is an important happening in the family's life—a happening which brings him together with all his neighbors. The Church is the center of his village even if he seldom goes into it. The rare Sunday when the priest comes to his chapel, the Mass is a big event, even if he does not attend. He knows almost everybody whom he meets at Mass. Mass is easily understood as a family dinner—as the "communion" of the community.

### another world

No wonder that he is confused at this big, clean, Gothic building where an usher assigns him his place next to some unknown lady, where he is allowed to go into Church only five minutes before Mass starts, and has to leave as soon as Mass is over—where hardly anybody is standing outside the Church after Mass since there is no plaza—and where there are so many Masses that you cannot see Mass as a family dinner, a house built around you, to suit you.

Standing there on that cold winter morning during the eleven

o'clock high Mass, I realized how hard it will be to explain to Jose and his friends that this is the same Church which, under another climate, appears so very different from at home. It will be hard for Jose to understand that he will be known to God alone in Church and hardly anybody else will recognize him. It will be hard for him to understand that you can go to Holy Communion every day in a Church where there are several Masses every day, and hard, too, to understand the English Gospel the priest reads, but even more difficult than to understand will it be for him to feel at home in English. I might be able to make him understand some of the features of parish life—but to understand a world is far from being at home in it. And how strange that a man should not feel at home in the house of his Father. How strange to each other two Catholic worlds can be. It is not always easy to see how beautiful it is that the universal Church can look so different in different cultures.

Or think of Maria, Jose's sister: she came with him to Mass, and with him was frightened away from the Church. Now she cannot believe that this is the Communion Mass of the Children of Mary. Where are their white veils? Why do they not sing, does nobody here know the song of Our Lady of Guadalupe? And why do people now start to come out of Church, and without talking to each other go straight across the busy, dirty street headed for home? Why do they not hang around and talk to each other? Jose and his friends cannot well avoid being bewildered.

### **dissatisfied children**

This is but one of the many instances into which you run continually, as a parish priest, of people who do not find in their parish what they came to look for. Jose's problem is not from this point of view different from the bewilderment of the convert, who during instructions has found faith in the reality of the Mystical Body visible in Christ's Church—and then finds himself socially isolated among faithful churchgoers. And it is not different from the problem of the mature layman exposed to years of sermons taken from Father Murphy's *Three Homilies for Every Sunday Gospel*—or of the young couple recently moved into a new apartment, who had hoped to find in the parish an atmosphere in which spiritual friendship is fostered, and found perfect distribution of sacraments, ritual and Catholic school education, but not the spirit they had hoped for.



To all these this parish does not give what they expect: to Jose it does not give the atmosphere of his home, to the convert it does not give the new human community he thought would be a consequence of spiritual communion, to the man yearning to grow it does not give the adult education program he hoped for, but only an endless repetition of what he has become insensible to through yearly recital in grade school catechism. It forces the young couple to make their own home a shelter for friendship without adequate help from the pastor from whom they expect it.

All these people come to the parish because there they find what seems to them most important: Mass, the confessional, and catechism for their children. Objections are directed not against the things they get, but rather against the frame within which they get them: Mass remains the sacrifice even if it is said quickly and adorned with a hasty sermon. Your sins are forgiven even if the priest is too rushed to give advice—and most people are so used to a silent confessor that they might be surprised at an instruction. Catechism remains true even if Sister has sixty children in her parochial school class. Marriage remains valid even if all the bride remembers of prenuptial instruction is that an overburdened priest, in ten minutes, asked her under oath a few strange questions, such as: had she ever been to a psychiatrist, would she be faithful to her husband, would she promise to avoid contraception, while at the same time he had to answer the phone on a sick call and take care of a staggering visitor at the door.

Is there something which could be interpreted as a criticism of the whole system underlying all these objectionable details? Criticism of detail is directed mostly against the officiating priest, not against the parish as such, and therefore is not pertinent to this discussion.

### **criteria for criticism**

Could it be that there is something fundamentally wrong with the parish in modern America? And if that be so, may Christians, especially laymen, criticize their Church, of which the unit most real to them is the parish? Many are afraid to do so out of a double misunderstanding: they do not distinguish between criticism and blame—and they do not distinguish the human from the divine element in the Church.

We cannot remain forever small children and take our parents for granted; only after the teens can a mature love for a parent develop. It's the same with Mother Church: an understanding of her humanity

in her human weakness will only strengthen, not diminish our love. Those who blame the Church mostly shrink from the personal responsibility which grows out of the realization that we are members of the Church. Blame is a fruit of laziness and perpetuates what is deplorable. Criticism brings about change, either in him who criticizes or in the Church criticized. It is always the fruit of hard work and prayer. A critical attitude toward the parish is just one of the areas in which Christian love for the Church can develop. But since criticism is always an implicit invitation to change, we have to pass to the second point and see to what degree the Church, or, concretely, the parish, is subject to change. And there are two attitudes toward change, equally unChristian, among Christians. One is the refusal of any development. This has its roots in a deep mistrust of human nature, as if God had not entrusted men with the power to make His institutions practicable, as if the mandate given to the apostles had been withdrawn. This mistrust lies in this error: necessary historical developments are taken for divine institutions. Man-made frames are taken for divine works of art. This attitude can be remedied by the study of theology and history. Theology will show us the seed of divine revelation and will teach us what God has done Himself; history will show us what men have done under God.

Opposed to the refusal of any development is the attitude of those who always want to change, who are like children who do not want to live in the dusty home their family built over centuries, and prefer to live in a quickly built shack on the edges of the property. If this attitude does not have its root in the unstable character of its proponents, it is based on an overestimation of human inventiveness within God's supernatural plan. The remedy to this inclination toward inorganic and sudden changes lies in an education toward humility. Custom always offers an assumption for wisdom, at least practical wisdom. Criticism of the modern parish therefore presupposes some knowledge of theology and of history, which often becomes visible in custom.

### **follow the man to his house . . . to the upper room**

Unless we know how a country grew, we do not know what it really is like. Unless we know what the parish was meant to be by God, and what it looked like when men first made God's idea visible, we will not have the basis to judge the parish we have today. How did the parish start? Certainly not with the apostles.



Christ did not make the parish. He made priests, and He needed a roof over His cenacle. (The priesthood is instituted by Christ, not the boundaries to His priesthood, expressed in modern parish limits.) For centuries, the Church was expanding—conscious that the end of the world was nigh. Every bishop grazed his flock, and whenever possible had a flock small enough that he himself could say Mass for them. The imagery for pastoral care as well as the relationship between pastor (the bishop was the only pastor) and his faithful was taken from the vocabulary of shepherds, Mediterranean shepherds, who have no fixed home and wander with their sheep from pasture to pasture—from earth to heaven. Christians considered themselves as strangers in a strange world, children banned from their country. The word "parish" came from a Greek verb meaning: to live like a foreigner—to be without a home.

### **the cenacle among non-Christians**

The twelve apostles found it necessary to ordain one man in every community to the fullness of the priesthood. This man, the bishop of the city, made the rounds and celebrated the sacred mysteries in the houses of different Christians. In the Station-Churches of Rome we have a remnant of this usage: the oldest among them carry the names of private families, and their name expresses nothing but the address at which the Christians would meet for Mass. In these homes Mass would be said regularly, and often the room in which Mass was said slowly developed into a chapel—the family ceased to use it as a dining room and the cenacle grew into a Church. The number of Christians too, continually was growing. Soon one pastor, the bishop, was not enough for the community, and so we see several popes ordaining priests—priests who would say Mass where the bishop could not go and who would preach whenever the bishop would not find the time to do so. Often these priests attended one particular Church in preference to others, but we cannot yet say that they were pastors. The bishop still was the only pastor in the city, and these priests were his assistants. Pope Innocent I in 417 tells us that he was in the habit of breaking his host, when saying Mass, into small fragments and sending one of these fragments to every priest celebrating in the city of Rome, that he might let it fall into his chalice and might realize that it is really one Mass said throughout the city, the Mass of the bishop. The breaking of the host into three parts today is a remnant of that custom.

## the parish as the heart of the city

From the beginning, Christianity developed faster in the cities than in the country. But by the end of the 5th century Christianity had expanded into new mission territories, and the last strongholds of paganism in the rural areas of southern Europe were falling by the 7th century. Always more and more bishops asked their priests to take over independently the exercise of their ministry. No more was the bishop the only father and the priests nothing but his helpers; the priests themselves had to take over under their bishops all three realms of pastoral duties: the administration of the sacraments, the teaching of the Gospel and the guidance of the people.

Of old when every city where Christians lived had its own bishop (or "angel" as St. John calls him in his seven letters to the seven "Churches" in Asia Minor), dioceses had been multiplied easily and eagerly. This is the reason why there are so many of them in the countries which came to the faith before the 6th century. Now the bishop made every one of his priests responsible for a well determined part of his people and slowly, clearly assigned the limits to the territory for which a priest was responsible—boundaries which often on one side remained open toward the virgin soil never yet touched by Christian preaching.

The parish as a living cell of the diocese had been brought into existence by the Church. Christ had instituted His priesthood for His people. In apostolic times the Church found it necessary to assign a given part of her Mystical Body to a given bishop. He alone is priest in the full sense of the word, he alone belongs to the teaching Church, he alone is a successor of the apostles, he alone wears the wedding ring to show that he is married to the Church. And later on the Church found it necessary to allow the bishop to subdivide his territory and to make his representatives, other priests, fully responsible for a parish. This is how the territorial parish was born, to which belong all those who live in a given territory, and for whom the pastor assumes responsibility: to feed, teach and guide those who are in the Church and to convert those who are outside. It went so far that in Europe the word "parish" became the word for "village."

Human factors contributed not less than supernatural faith to make the parish the heart of the community in Catholic countries. The priest quite often was the most educated person in the village, custom and folklore centered in the Church and civil life was regulated by the



progress of the liturgical year as the life of every individual was deeply connected with the Church in the middle of the village. Often also—sometimes unfortunately—the Church became a center for political action. Later a breakdown in these human factors threatened to remove the parish from its central position in the hearts of the people. And then came the Reformation, and with it the Catholic community of Europe was broken down. From then on we can hardly speak of a common development of the parish in different countries. We cannot make it our objective here to study the reasons which brought about the “loss of the masses” in France or the motives which made the German parish so susceptible to the “liturgical movement,” or the final juridical organization that Pius X (the first pastor in a long time to become pope) brought about in 1917. Our objective is to understand historically only those elements common to the American parish—and not those minor elements, as important as they might be, which shaped the characteristic face of this or that national parish. After all, we are in search of the common denominator—if there is one—of most criticism voiced by Catholics against the Church in this country.

### **the protective parish**

The American parish—if we can speak about such a thing—was always established as a center around which a minority rallied: people who used the parish to defend what they had. The Church always had reasons to be concerned for the protection, not only of the faith of her children, but also of their old Christian customs with their strong symbolic power to evoke occasions for the profession of faith. The Church always had been made into a bulwark of tradition and continuity. At the moment of the big migration of Catholics to this country, the Church had reason to be overconcerned. Poor migrants who left their country to find a living came into a highly competitive society, heavily influenced by the Calvinistic faith that the good succeed, and in the joy of its new-found independence, somewhat set against the newcomers. They brought their priests with them, pastors of a migrating flock, rather than missionaries to a civilization in need. They were more concerned to conserve the faith of their people than to convert a new nation. Heavy stress was laid on meetings among “our own,” associations which would foster marriages among Catholics, and education which would equip the child to remain a Catholic. The Church became a tremendous bulwark for the Catholic. Never before

had the Church had to perform this task, or at least never before had it succeeded. Small numbers of missionaries had converted whole countries. Some Catholic minorities had withstood the Reformation—and tiny little groups of Catholics had been able, along with the language of their homeland, to conserve the faith in the interior of the Balkans and the Middle East. But never before had a group of immigrants changed their national allegiance and remained faithful to the Church. And they did it through their schools and parochial societies: which willy-nilly constituted another chance for Catholics to feel themselves a minority in an alien culture. Repeated insistence that you can be a good American and at the same time a good Catholic only contributed toward this feeling.

### **the budding parish**

Catholics may belong to a minority, but the Church cannot be a minority. She is always the leaven: a minority lives in an enclave—the leaven penetrates. To separate the leaven from the flour means uselessness for both. If Catholics ever lose their concern for those who do not have God, they lose also their charity. Many a contemporary parish has contributed towards this separation by preserving an atmosphere which was once necessary but is no longer so.

In the sheltered atmosphere of a Church which continues the traditions of a geographically isolated Catholic community within a non-Catholic society, the parish has developed into a most efficient center for the administration of the sacraments and the imparting of religious instructions. In fact, never has there been a period in Church history that saw such a high percentage of baptized Catholics so well instructed and living such an intense sacramental life. Without a knowledge of the historical background of today's parish it would be impossible to account for the one surprising shortcoming of this Church in America: the lack of influence of Catholics among non-Catholics, or, to say it in other words, their lack of missionary spirit. Only by realizing that this lack is a characteristic leftover from a struggle for survival, do we understand that it is not a direct refusal of responsibility—but rather a sign of immaturity.

A century ago, a newly arrived immigrant was often socially confined to his own national group—without denying his background, he could not associate with "the old American." That was the time when the Church had to protect him from contact with non-Catholics in fear



that through his "otherness" he might lose his faith; and the immigrant in turn could not feel responsible for neighbors he did not know. Today it is rare for a Catholic not to be accepted because of his background. Many Protestants have become his neighbors, associates and friends. It is often under the influence of a long past competition that today the Catholic fails to meet the new missionary challenge.

It is as if God had allowed a strong seed to mature in the earth during the winter and now the time has come for it to bud: well-trained Catholics all over this country are willing to risk responsibility for those outside and are waiting for specific preparation in their parish. The word "parishioner" should not refer only to the Catholic. The parish must become and is becoming in the consciousness of the Catholic the spiritual home of all who live within its boundaries—even if many do not know where their home is. This is happening all over. The Legion of Mary is growing; these are laymen who consecrate two evenings a week to the conversion of their neighbor. The Christian Family Movement, Cana Conferences, the changing of old-type Church societies, and the life-long struggle of many a priest prepare the spirit into which converts, the fruit of various campaigns, can be welcomed. Even the Catholic outsider like Jose is meeting with a reception on which former Catholic newcomers could never count.

Years ago the challenge of a new mass migration of Catholics would have been met with the establishment of national parishes. The average American parish had not yet started to be either American or missionary. Today, very slowly, the way is opening for a newcomer to be a Catholic in his own way without having to insist on it, without having to "protect" his human background in order to save his faith.

### **special mass with Spanish sermon?**

That Sunday when I met Jose and his friends at eleven o'clock on the Church steps I could not help asking: Should we have a special Mass for him with a Spanish sermon? Might not such a Mass develop into a *Jim Crow* meeting? Should we introduce Spanish devotions? Special Spanish social groups? Should we allow his sister's friends to wear their white veils or should we prudently introduce the traditional sign of the Children of Mary into our established congregation? Or should we hope that a national church be established for him in our neighborhood with the danger that his children will reject their faith with their inevitable rejection of Spanish culture?

### understanding and the future

These questions about Jose, and many more about others who do not find in our parishes what they seek, must be answered with some background of history and theology, and with a prudence which judges the unique living situation. These questions must be asked courageously and answered always anew. Criticism of the parish will thus become an examination of conscience for everybody who engages in it: layman, priest and outsider alike. And if it is not criticism of the clergy or the laity, but of the institution itself, it will mostly revolve around the idea that the protective parish is a thing of the past almost everywhere in this country.

During the winter it was good that the seed remained hidden in the earth, but in spring, if it does not bud it rots.

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A. P. Campbell

#### His Angel Shall Bear Thee Up

God-loaned guardian  
Of my earthly day,  
Creator-placed  
To guide me  
As I push probationary foot  
Along this sliding way;  
Ghostly gyroscope,  
Leveling me  
Until my banners all are furled  
And I reach that far eternal port  
Beyond this temporal sea.

Friend, who walks beside me  
In another world,  
O be solicitous  
To keep your wing about my shoulder curled,  
For there are dangers,

O my angel,  
Pot-holes perilous  
And unprovided falls;  
And I must walk the slippery pole  
Of righteousness  
Precarious  
Over the gulping pit.

Urge me, angel,  
When I am faint of heart,  
When I'm foot-cumbered,  
Travel-hampered,  
And much too desolate for groans:  
Dragged down by ghosts  
Of dried enthusiasms  
And loves long dead  
But clinging to the bones.

Angel, pour your hot breath  
Into my soul,  
And fan each failing gray coal  
Into flame  
And from my four heart corners  
Let the quick fires glow  
Of Love  
Of scorching Love.

And when I am old,  
Shrivel-bodied,  
And bent against the grain,  
Then coax my dull eyes  
To the goal  
Where I may draw young breath again  
(Your hand in mine)  
At God the Father's knee,  
While my fresh heart  
Leaps in romping  
At the feet  
Of the Trinity.





Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A.

## our urban parish societies

*Some reflections on the defects and potentialities of  
parish societies by the author of the book,  
You Are Not Your Own.*

The task of the program chairman of a parish organization has its peculiar difficulties. There is an hour spot between the business meeting and the refreshments to be filled. The attendance is usually quite small and the finances for speakers very limited with the result that big name speakers cannot be attracted. The program chairman is limited oftentimes to the people in the community who are public relations officers for a public service such as the FBI, Civil Defense, or the fire department, to people who have a cause to plead, or to people who are perennials.

The speaker who frequently responds to the pleas of the harassed program chairman gets a good insight into the workings of parish organizations as he waits impatiently for the business meeting to drag to its end. Traditionally these organizations represent an important part of the parish effort. This could be judged from the importance given to them in the weekly parish bulletin and the pulpit announcements. Generally speaking the meetings of these organizations are the only official opportunities outside of religious services for parishioners to become acquainted as parishioners, to discuss the implications of

their faith in their daily life, and to plan and work together in an endeavor that would promote the objectives of the parish.

Considering the importance placed upon these societies, the results from almost any standard are usually disappointing to the priests and laity involved. They are designed to enroll collectively all members of the parish. From a study of twenty-three urban southern parishes that had an average of 13.2 societies, the results showed an active membership averaging 142 in each parish or approximately 3.6% of all parishioners who were fourteen years of age or over.<sup>1</sup>

The content of the meeting is further revealing. The business meetings grind out their work slowly and with few of the membership outside the officers participating in discussion. The activities are conceived more often as means of raising money rather than as a device for getting people to know each other as a basis of establishing a social solidarity. The program chairman seldom has a program in the sense of developing over a period a certain framework for thought and action such as the liturgy, social action, or child guidance. The failure to make use of the techniques of group dynamics and the lack of intellectual content discourage people with higher education from attending. There is little challenge or opportunity for them to use their unique talents.

After the recitation of the litany of the disabilities of our traditional parish societies, the question arises as to whether they should be discontinued and a new type designed to meet the present needs of the parish and parishioners. Such a discussion should not shock us for it is not a discussion of a change in Church doctrine but a change in the structure of our present organizations. The body of doctrine cannot change, but organizations can change as Church architecture changes from period to period.

### **extra-parochial demands**

In discussing change we must discuss some fundamental changes in urban parish life. In past generations the parish, the city parish as well as the rural parish, was much closer to being the center of a real community. The place of work was closer to the neighborhood, one's friends and relatives were usually closer, one's social needs were filled in an area that more closely approximated a parish or neighborhood than it does today. Mass communications, extensive travel, and higher

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<sup>1</sup>*Social Relations in the Urban Parish*, Joseph H. Fichter, S.J., Chicago University Press, Chicago, p. 157.

education have extended the geographical boundaries of our lives while the boundaries of our parish remained unchanged.

It is this fundamental problem of the complexity of our lives with their extra-parochial demands that seems to plague parish societies and the parish itself. The problem is one that has long preceded the cause. Because only 3% of the parishioners are active in parish societies, it does not mean that 97% are not participating in some Church organization. While urban life has been becoming more complex and neighborhood and local communities tending to lose importance, Catholic organizations are growing apace on a city-wide or supraparochial level. This should not be interpreted to mean that the members of supraparochial units are defecting from their parish but that they are responding to a genuine and wider need.

For example we have Catholic interracial councils in our large cities. They answer the need Catholic laymen have to work on the racial problem on a city-wide basis. The problem of racial discrimination in the school system, in hospitals, and in jobs must be faced on the top levels where city-wide policies are formed. Likewise the Catholic labor school movement developed out of the depression and the rapid widespread organization of workers. It is hardly conceivable that each parish could run a labor school. It invariably starts on a city level in order to draw sufficient numbers and a competent faculty.

### **the parish and a wider apostolate**

Besides organizations that are affiliated with the Church on a diocesan or city-wide level are those civic and economic groups in which the full living of Christianity in the world demands one take part. Trade unions, professional and business associations, civic and political organizations, highly specialized ones as the Alcoholics Anonymous, are a few. These meetings demand time that might otherwise be given to a parish organization. If it is a choice between one of the above and a parish society, the ultimate decision must be based on how best the Christian can further the work of the Mystical Body. It is not expected that in every case the decision will be in favor of the parish society. What has been known as parish loyalty, narrowly conceived, cannot be the sole criterion of the fervent Catholic. The Christian in the world has a responsibility to the temporal order which might in given cases take priority over his responsibility to parish groupings.

These are plain facts of modern urban living which the Church in



its top councils now forthrightly recognizes. Archbishop Montini wrote as Pro-Secretary of State: "Let us always take careful note of the fact that most of the great social problems which Catholics must face from now on, both in regard to their particular nature and their solutions, extend far beyond the restricted organization of the parish."

Pope Pius XII says: "It must be remembered that notwithstanding the importance of the work that can be carried out in a parish and nowhere else, and the fundamental and irreplaceable energies of the parish, the rapidly growing complexity of modern life from a technical and spiritual point of view calls for a wider extension of Catholic Action."

These quotations could be used to state the case for supraparochial apostolate, but here we wish to emphasize the phrase, "the fundamental and irreplaceable energies of the parish." If the parish is becoming increasingly a sacramental service station, this is an unfortunate turn of events. The urban parish may be far from the close-knit community of medieval days or rural Catholic areas, but it does represent an area where there are associations and social functions that must be brought under the redeeming influence of Christ and the Church. The younger children go to school and take their recreation in the neighborhood, wives spend most of their day in this geographical area. Husbands who get off the commuter train on Friday at 6:22 P.M. and who do not board it again until Monday at 7:46 A.M. spend most of the in between time in the locality of their parish. With the qualifications made at the beginning of this article the neighborhood or parish still represents an important factor in the lives of most family people.

To use again the example of the interracial problem, it is now recognized that in our northern cities immense progress has been made on the policy-making and civil rights level. The major problem now is in the neighborhood where racial tensions are continually boiling over. The action of a parish can be the determining factor in solving or failing to solve the problem locally. Parish organizations designed to solve community problems, to strengthen family life, to deepen one's spiritual life, and to perform necessary services for the parish itself are as necessary today as they ever were.

### **the well-ordered parish society**

The question then resolves itself into whether our present societies can be made to do the job or whether new forms must be introduced.

From the above remarks on the present failure of our societies we can distinguish six positive characteristics that should mark a well-ordered parish society.

1. There should be some intellectual content to the meetings.
2. The meetings should systematically deepen the spiritual life of the membership.
3. The intellectual content and the spirituality should be related to the actual lives of the members.
4. The purpose of the group should be clearly defined and understood by all.
5. The meetings should be run in such a way that the best techniques of group dynamics are used affording maximum participation to members.
6. Since the life of a group is sustained by action, the action or service must reflect the purpose of the group and meet a real need of the parish and parishioners.

These criteria seem to have validity for a teen-age, parent, occupational or liturgical group, or a rosary society. While this writer takes a dim view of the present traditional parish organizations' adequately servicing the parish and neighborhood, he does not mean that their effectiveness cannot be appreciably improved. Since complete change of structure cannot be expected to come with one stroke, the gradual method may be the most effective and possibly the only way of bringing about long-range changes.

In this matter of re-organizing parish societies, the organizations on a city-wide or supradiocesan level, and higher education, should not be looked upon as rivals. Indeed it may be these people who have been associated with supraparochial organizations who will be best suited to help make the necessary changes. There are many examples of people joining an organization on a city-wide level and with the experience gained from it later forming parish units of the same organizations. The wide contacts, the spiritual formation, and motivation these wider movements offer should prove a valuable training ground for the future parish leader.

The situation is by no means a hopeless one. It requires re-thinking on the part of the clergy and laity. The practical steps that can be taken today and tomorrow depend on the actual situation in one's own parish. The Holy Spirit can be counted on to guide us on the theoretical level and in the field of human relations.



Eva Maria Kallir

## sunday at st. gertrude's

*As we publish this description of Mass  
in the Church made famous by Father Pius Parsch  
we are not unmindful of parallel developments  
in liturgical participation in America,  
notably in the parishes of Monsignor Hellriegel  
in St. Louis, Missouri  
and Father H. A. Reinhold in Sunnyside, Washington*

St. Gertrude's, in the little town of Klosterneuburg near Vienna, is a well-known name to those familiar with the work and writings of Pius Parsch, who died a year ago. Here it was that he began his liturgical apostolate, whose aim it ever was to bring the mass of the people to a closer understanding and participation in the life and prayer of the Church; and here in St. Gertrude's, where Father Parsch has found his last resting place, his life's work is being carried on.

It is really little more than a chapel, a small ancient building of heavy stone. Its great simplicity, which is one of warmth, not of austerity, is a perfect setting for the solemn single-mindedness of Mass there. The heavy columns and low round arches, the large, irregular stone blocks of the plain walls, the semi-circular apse with its free-standing altar—all these are partly the oldest Romanesque, partly the most recent 20th century—complementing one another in such perfect harmony that it is hard to tell where each one begins and ends.

At Mass it is much the same: what was born of the vitality of the earliest ages, is here completely valid, completely fitting the needs of a 1955 congregation.



That congregation is not large, probably not much over a hundred (nor would the chapel hold many more). Most of them have come up from Vienna, some are local people. There are students, school children, a few older women—but young people are the most numerous and there are a lot more men than usual. A strange, intangible sense of restrained festivity seems to fill them all: all these very normal, very every-day men and women. For here are types that you can meet all week in any street or home or office: so that it comes as a surprise, a shock almost, when it suddenly strikes you: this is what it must have been like to walk into a gathering of early Christians! This feeling of unity, this exclusive attention, this inescapable sense of an invisible, yet overwhelmingly powerful happening. And of everyone's necessary part in it: there are many moments during Mass when it would become quite uncomfortable for a mere "onlooker," moments when he would feel (as no doubt an intruder in the catacombs would have felt) that here is no place for him. But then, strictly speaking—*is* there a place at Mass for mere onlookers? And has it not been made all too easy, in our own day, for all of us to become such bystanders?

And you find yourself wondering—if you have ever really been to Mass before. . . .

### **the use of the vernacular**

Many of the prayers are said in common, in the vernacular; and they are no longer just words memorized, and said with more or less devotion, but the one necessary expression for the thought of a given moment. The Introit, the Offertory, the Communion verse, are sung, not in the shortened form of our missals, but as the full psalms they originally were, with their recurrent antiphons. The melodies are simple, somewhere between folk song and Gregorian chant; so simple and so fitting the words, that you scarcely think about the tune at all: which must have been the way that our chant began, flowing from the words as their natural expression. It is astonishing how such unhurried, repeated singing of a text can make you aware of its meaning, and aware of why you are singing it on this particular Sunday.

The shorter answers are given in Latin. After the Epistle, the priest comes from behind the altar to a desk-like pulpit immediately facing the congregation, to read the Gospel in German. The sermon that follows takes up all the texts of today's Mass, and they become as though connected with one shining thread, a thread that runs on into

each private life and each day of the coming week, and binds them all to one another and to this central, illuminating and quickening focal point: Sunday Mass.

At the Offertory everyone goes in procession to the white-covered table that stands in front of the altar. There is a basket on it for coins, but many people lay loaves of bread there, or apples, or other foods—or perhaps a skein of wool—to be given to the poor.

For all the inspiration of common praying and singing, it is the periods of common silence that are the most poignant, and give meaning to the rest. For it is a silence of understanding, a silence that happens when words fail; so deep is it that the whispered words of the Consecration fill it like a shout.

At the Agnus Dei, the Kiss of Peace, usually restricted to priest and deacons, finds its way into the congregation. (It has been suggested that this ancient gesture of friendship might be replaced by one more meaningful to our own times—as, for instance, a handshake.) The character of Communion as a meal is stressed, as groups of five people approach at a time, to stand around the white-covered offertory table.

After Mass, when the priest and the altar boys in their simple white robes have walked down the Church and out through the low portal, everyone joins in the Benedicite and psalm of thanksgiving. The sunshine comes in through the open door, and the pealing of the bell in the little spire, and now and then the crowing of a cock ". . . bless the Lord, all things that grow on the earth—birds of the air—sons of men—bless the Lord."

### **after Mass**

St. Gertrude's stands in the courtyard of a low grey building which was once a hospital. At the present time it shelters a company of Russian soldiers of the occupation forces. The young sentinel who stands a few feet from the Church, who Sunday after Sunday listens to the singing and praying, and watches those groups of happy, peaceful, and obviously "working" men and women, looks as if he were having his own thoughts.

Among the people who crowd into the tiny sacristy for a breakfast of bread and tea, many have never met before; yet you would think they all knew each other; and that is a bigger achievement in reticent Europe than it would be in America.

You cannot easily go home from such a Mass and forget all about it. A Sunday that begins in this way would really have to be very

different from what our Sundays usually are. In fact, the whole week seems out of proportion; and it is quite disturbing to try to imagine the kind of week that *would* be in keeping with such a Sunday Mass.

Yet it would be hard to say just what it is that makes it so different. Certainly it is not anything "done" in this or that way; not the fact that the priest faces the people, or that everyone knows the Mass prayers, or that there is an offertory procession. You can copy all these "trappings" and achieve no more than an impressive show. The main thing is something very simple: it is the Mass itself, taken very seriously, in all its implications, by everyone present; a heightened awareness of its stirring sanctity. That such realization should find its outward expression is only natural, and that it should find it in the newly-understood words and forms of the liturgy is also natural.

Obviously, all this cannot be done without thorough preparation of inner disposition as well as of externals. For this reason it may be easier in a small congregation; but it need not be, and has not been, restricted to such.

If it is true, as has sometimes been said, that our own time is in many ways similar to the first Christian centuries—in its upheavals and restless spirit, in its persecutions and pagan atmosphere, in its sharp division of beliefs and its need for extreme choices—then perhaps it is only fitting that we go back in our worship to those earliest ages. Perhaps this is to be our work in the Church of the 20th century, to rediscover, as it were, our roots, with all their old strength and vitality.





Jerem O'Sullivan-Barra

# co-existence-and christian conscience

*Before accepting the prevailing line  
in most of the Catholic press,  
it would be well to give serious consideration  
to the arguments presented in this article.*

The term "co-existence" is having a very bad press in the United States, especially in Catholic publications. A prominent Catholic columnist feels he is dealing a death blow to the respectability of this word when he points out in one of our most popular Catholic magazines: "The term was invented by Stalin himself in 1927." He goes on to point out that by co-operating with schemes for "peaceful co-existence" we are being duped by a long-term Kremlin strategy whose aim is eventually to engulf the free world.

Incidentally, not only American Catholics deplore the serious acceptance of the term or concept of co-existence. Bertram Wolfe, in a forum on the topic, "Is Co-existence Possible" dismissed the expression "peaceful co-existence" as poisoned words, coined not by Stalin, but by Leon Trotsky. These words were to be used, not as the expression of a principle, but as a tactic which would serve the objectives of Soviet policy—just as the slogan "Peace" is only a tactic to the Soviet leaders, but a principle to those who are sincere among the leaders of the Western Alliance.

It seems to me, at least, that it is in our Catholic press, and in the utterances of Catholic leaders that we find the most frequent and most outright rejection of the term "co-existence," the most complete refusal to bring to it any rational attitude, but rather to meet it with an emotionally charged indignation. The National Commander of the Catho-

lic War Veterans urges his fellow-veterans to, "... speak out against any made-in-Russia type of peaceful co-existence," and asks, "How can we co-exist with evil?"

### **Holy Father speaks on co-existence**

The 1954 Christmas Message of the Holy Father on Co-existence was published in an American Catholic newspaper under the headline, *Holy Father Deplores Co-existence*, though in point of fact, His Holiness had done nothing of the kind. A reading of the full text of the message reveals that Pope Pius XII had analyzed co-existence in an almost prophetic manner, and stated flatly: "There is some hope that today's co-existence may bring mankind closer to peace." The editor was mirroring more the prevailing American Catholic attitude than the powerfully reasoned and somberly prophetic message of the Holy Father.

Several times in considering the present rejection of the term co-existence, and the impatient scorn directed at the one who dares to examine dispassionately the concept of co-existence, I have been reminded of a historical parallel recounted by Jacob Burckhardt in relation to Renaissance Italy. The people of Milan, tired to death of a war prosecuted by their ruler, and suffering from starvation brought on by continued warfare, begged him for peace, crying out, "Pace," "Pace," as he passed them on the streets. For this breach of the peace, (by a supreme irony, using the word "Peace" was a breach of the peace punishable by hanging) their ruler turned his mercenaries upon the beseeching populace, and two hundred persons lost their lives then and there. Priests were even ordered to substitute "tranquillitatem" in the prayer, "Dona nobis Pacem." Peace, as a word and as a concept, had lost its respectability, had become dangerous in both aspects. Such is the state of the term and concept of co-existence at this juncture of history, when a similar fate has again overtaken the word "peace." Peace, the heart of the Christian message has almost been monopolized by its enemies.

### **modus vivendi or modus moriendi**

The aim of this article is to make an attempt at a dispassionate analysis of co-existence, and of the alternative that we must face if we reject it outright. Co-existence is no more than a modus vivendi as opposed to a modus moriendi. Any attitude to co-existence must have

profound implications for the Christian conscience, and it is these implications that are being by-passed in any emotionally overcharged, or merely strategic, discussion of the term. First of all, let us posit a basic definition of co-existence as: the necessity of a person, group or nation to live side by side with another person, group, or nation or under a general condition especially when this living-together comes not from any choice of the person or group concerned but from a situation not of their devising. In short, a mutual toleration marked only by the absence of open warfare. Such a co-existence, when applied to an individual, may refer to existence in a family, where differing temperaments make daily living a rather dreadful torture unless one takes thought and works out a scheme that will obviate some of the worst clashes of temperament. It may even be a marriage that has become a nightmare in revealing qualities in one or the other partner that were even not suspected when the ceremony was contracted. Here again, if rationality is permitted to enter—not to mention the golden thread of grace—a co-existence of mutual toleration is possible instead of rupture of relations—or mayhem.

### **co-existence in history**

There were times in the past, for example, during the prolonged struggle with Islam, or the period of the Thirty Years War, when two groups decided that they could not live side by side. The Thirty Years War, though it had political causes, was exacerbated by the religious differences of the participants. One of the reasons for the useless prolongation of this war, which kept increasing in scope and involving more areas of Europe, was the fact that one of the participants refused even to sit down to negotiate with one of the other concerned parties to the dispute. I refer to the rejection by Sweden of peace proposals made by Pope Urban VIII in 1636; the Swedes would not treat with any Papal Legate. The war dragged on until 1648 when the Treaty of Westphalia established a condition of co-existence among exhausted contenders. Those who were still opposed politically and doctrinally had come to a realization that the inability to overpower or destroy what they opposed called for a living-together dictated not by choice but by the necessity of living at all. The Peace Treaty was not a perfect one, but sieges were lifted so that towns could come to life again, and an unconditional amnesty restored property to those who had been deprived of their possessions, and economic life could begin again to meet



the needs of peace. The Catholics now had to co-exist with Lutherans and both with Calvinists.

**"how can we co-exist with evil?"**

But the more precarious co-existence for the Christian is that brought up by the speaker cited above who asked rhetorically: "How can we co-exist with evil?" The answer to that is very easy. That is precisely what is required of Christians every single day while they are living in the world. The Christian cannot drive sin out of the world. It is here to stay until the devil and all his works are destroyed. The Christian cannot even drive out of his own inner life the inclination to evil which we call concupiscence and which is our common legacy from the original sin. The use of any force which would put down these evils for good is ruled out. We must then co-exist in a world where the evil let loose by original sin abounds, and we can only combat it by moral means without (with God's grace) allowing ourselves to be spotted by that world. Co-existence, living side by side, with threatening and unsought evils, is thus a profound reality of the total human condition—and especially is it the essence of the condition of the Christian, whose conscience is called into play at every turn in his life so that he can make his choices according to laws of God as they have come to him through Christ and the Church founded by Him.

To return to the political level, Arthur Schlesinger, History Professor at Harvard, has caught some of this when he defines the present co-existence with Russia as "living with crisis." This is much more difficult, takes much more endurance, patience, charity—and any other virtue or skill you may want to name—than "blasting Russia off the map." But he goes on to point out that living with crisis is better than not living at all. This precarious living with crisis is indeed the daily experience of the Christian who must conquer the enemy within and the enemy without (in the form of temptation) without ever a let-up in the struggle until his soul is released to the judgment of God. Co-existence with Communism is, for the Christian, similar to co-existence with the sin that is in the world, a decision to be alive to its dangers, to oppose it by moral means at whatever cost to the individual.

In the political order, there is no doubt that the Russia which asks for peaceful co-existence from the other nations of the world, and more particularly from the United States (its only match in gigantism of extension and resources) is that same Russia which maintains and

builds a great war potential, including atomic and hydrogen bombs, which has reduced the free nations around her borders to the status of satellite or slave states, which has helped impose a tyranny similar to her own in the great expanse of China, and which through various local Communist parties has fomented war and unrest in such areas as Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Italy. We are warned that if we are lulled by the words "peaceful co-existence" sang so sweetly by the Communist leaders, by their Communist stooges in Eastern Europe and China, and by their neutralist friends in India and Western Europe, we will find ourselves in the loving embrace of the Russian Bear—an embrace which crushes out all life.

### **the "terrible simplifiers" of the war years**

In passing, it may be well to mention that those who most deplore that absence of total war which we call co-existence, are in many cases those who were most conspicuous by their silence when the American relationship to Russia was one of co-belligerency. If Russia is so evil that we cannot co-exist in the same world with her, why was it possible to be her co-belligerent in the most destructive war of all history? Russia is no different now from what she was when we fought by her side—except that now Russian Communism has dominion over a hundred million more people in Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States. Her leaders have a hegemony over the People's Republic of China, and thus unite a greater land mass between the Iron Curtain in Europe and the China Sea than any conqueror has united since Genghis Khan seven hundred years ago.

The foes of co-existence now are the same "terrible simplifiers" they were during World War II. Their argument is simple. Wherever there is a great, threatening force in the world, throw all you've got into blasting it off the face of the earth. What are weapons for, if not to be used—in a good cause, of course. America had a good cause in World War II—the freeing of peoples enslaved by the tyranny of Nazism, and the re-establishment of the rule of law and justice between nations. To this end, any enemy of Nazism was our co-belligerent, our ally. This included Russia, who was our ally only by force of circumstances, having first chosen the Nazis as allies in the Hitler-Stalin Pact. American Catholics fought the same war, with the same weapons, as the troops led by Communist leaders. To a far greater extent than their Russian co-belligerents, American troops participated in the saturation

or retaliatory bombing of cities such as Hamburg, Dresden, Berlin. In Germany alone, sixty-one cities were bombed by the U. S. Army Air Force, destroying or damaging 3,600,000 homes and making 7,500,000 persons homeless. This is exclusive of damage to military installations or industrial plants.

At the same time as we were carrying on all-out war against the Germany of Hitler, we were supplying our Russian allies with immense quantities of war matériel and general supplies, including the five thousand planes that helped hold the day at Stalingrad. It was with this help that Russia slowly turned an already lost war into a stalemate, and later into a victory on the Eastern front that was made possible by the second front of the Allies in the air and on the Western and Southern coasts of Europe. It was with this aid that she consolidated her position in East Europe, and then gained her territorial and power objectives at secret conferences at Teheran and Yalta—where at the same time, the Western Allies lost the war from a moral point of view.

The foes of co-existence today are indeed most often those who, by being the "terrible simplifiers" of the war years made the present threatening ascendancy of Russia possible.

### **communism — part of total moral bankruptcy**

The great danger is that from the Christian side, these simplifiers will have their way again, and carry with them as quiet sheep the great masses of the Christian community. Those who inveigh against peaceful co-existence and who demand a "showdown with Russia" are those who see our present crisis as originating solely with Communism. They fail to see that Communism in Russia is only a part of a total crisis that afflicts the West—of the Free World, as well as Moscow and its dependent territories. As mentioned above, Moscow only reached its present position because of the moral bankruptcy of the Western Allies during and at the end of World War II. In any war, the tendency is to become like one's enemy. We in America sanctioned one by one the methods of our enemy—the extirpation of which methods was our justification for entering the war in the first place. In the name of the American people, mass expulsion of civilians was ordered (at Potsdam); slave labor detachments, composed of drafted soldiers were legalized to rebuild Russia (at Yalta); innocent people were burned alive in the flaming ovens of their homes as were the innocents in the ovens of Auschwitz; whole countrysides were denuded of their productive equip-



ment in the name of reparations. In the end, the victors were just about as morally bankrupt as the vanquished. But as an earnest of their moral blindness, they looked down on the vanquished with so great a moral condescension—even detestation—that they refused to let their troops fraternize with the civilians of occupied Germany in the first flush of victory. The conquerors looted homes, and let the vanquished starve in their gutted cellars, or on the roads during the expulsions, to prove to them what moral lepers they were. In a sense, that is what has happened in the Cold War. We are reduced to the belief that the only weapons we can use are those possessed by our opponents—the weapons of violence. To this extent, we have lost any war with them in advance.

That the great spectre of Communism should rise out of this morass of death and evil is not a surprising thing. That we can expurge the moral bankruptcy by destroying Communism by all the force at our disposal is a dreadful over-simplification. The essential fallacy of the argument against attempts to continue the present policy of co-existence 'until something better can be made of it, is that spiritual evils can be driven out by material means. This by-passes the total reality of a situation in which Communism is only a result, a symptom of that blunted moral sense, that sickness of the spirit, from which we in the Western world are suffering—as nations and as individuals. We Christians are more to blame than others, because we should not have been silent, and were silent, we should not have conformed and we have conformed. People have looked to us if not for guidance—then at least for a pure, unafraid reaction. They have found us Catholics, to use Frank J. Sheed's phrase, "horribly like everyone else." Communism will continue to take advantage of our moral ambiguity and will flourish and thrive until our own moral stand is clear.

All through the 1954 Christmas Message of Pope Pius XII is the clear emphasis on the fact that both sides in the "cold calm" are guilty of many errors. He does not see the present picture as unmitigated good arrayed against unmitigated evil.

### **what do we want – a shooting war?**

If co-existence with Communism is "shameful appeasement," then what alternative is there? The most obvious one would be a shooting war. A shooting war today means total war, and total war means the use of thermo-nuclear bombs, weapons and devices. It was a two-billion

dollar investment of the United States during World War II that made the development of the atomic bomb possible. Had it not been for a war situation, it is debatable whether any such amount would have been thrown into nuclear research, or whether atomic energy would have been developed in any other form. In any case the investment "paid off" in the carnage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and America ushered the world into the thermo-nuclear age via the sudden pulverization of two Asian cities and the rendering into radio-active dust of hundreds of thousands of Asian bodies. Looking into such a future one can visualize an epitaph, "Man, died by his own hand." Only there would be no one to write it. It is a truism to say that the alternative to co-existence is co-extinction. But the point of this article is not that we should join the forces of co-existence for fear of physical death but for fear of moral death.

### **the use of the sky**

It was publicly announced by the leaders of American foreign policy that in any new war the U. S. would follow a strategy of "massive retaliation." This retaliation was understood to mean the "taking out," or destruction, of whole towns by hydrogen bombs. So great was the revulsion and dread, even on the part of our allies, at such a policy, that we have recalled it and have substituted one of strategic attack with thermo-nuclear devices of more restricted capacity. But, in any case, we do not have to use much imagination to know how the next war will be fought. The United States has a world-encircling net of bases from which planes bearing the dread burden of atomic and hydrogen weapons are ready to take off. The story of the Strategic Air Command reads like a fairy-story, or rather a demoniac tale to destroy whatever peace of mind is left to the ordinary citizen over whose head it constantly plies its appointed flights.

An article in Life Magazine tells us that: "... the Strategic Air Command is always practising, leaving its long white vapor trails as the B-36's and B-47's make their lonely bomb runs eight miles high in the upper atmosphere, or sometimes a converging pattern of trails as fighter jets try to intercept them. To the earthbound citizen this mock battle is a kind of space-cadet fantasy—soundless, invisible save for those spreading puffs of vapor or the chance glint of sunlight off a far away aluminum wing." The article adds detail to vivid detail, stressing the tremendous planning which goes with this ceaseless criss-crossing of the

skies, the airmen always ready, always flying in full battle regalia, the refueling of some SAC bomber in the air every five minutes of the day or night, the targets already chosen. "Every plane," we are assured, "has an untouchable flyaway kit of enough spare parts for 30 days operation—and 30 days is at least 15 times as long as anybody in SAC thinks an airwar would last."

A recent television comedy program boiled all this sky combat down to a joke when, as a credit title to a movie spoofing the Hollywood air force stories, it ran the following: "We thank the United States Army Air Force for the use of the sky." This mirrors in a way what other less powerful nations must feel when they see the sky being monopolized by this incessant weaving, intercepting, criss-crossing, refueling, of bombers and jet fighters, readying for an explosion that may burst over their helpless heads.

### **all-out, fall-out war**

This is the war that is the alternative to the condition of co-existence, unsatisfactory as this condition may seem. This war would start immediately after enemy attack on this country. The long range strategic bombers would take off and retaliate even if the President, as Commander-in-Chief, is incapacitated or cut off by the attack. Someone has pointed out that "no one was going to have to hunt around in the ruins of the first onslaught for someone to issue the order for atomic counter-bombing." It is for this war, using the sky as the source of dread and death, that the deserts of America are blooming as the rose—those roses of fire and white dust—flowers of evil, filling the landscape with their evanescent forms. It is the all-out, fall-out war of fission and fusion that we must ask for if we refuse to preserve the present phase of co-existence even in its most negative meaning as "the absence of total war."

Two recent Catholic thinkers of some reputation feel that a Christian cannot in good conscience take part in thermo-nuclear war. The Rev. Conrad Pepler, O.P. (*War in Tradition and Today*—Blackfriars, February 1954) states that the possibility of a "just war" in the traditional sense is scarcely realizable today, since any war is a total war and a total war destroys the justice of any cause. "It would therefore," he states, "seem to be impossible to launch a war against Communism to protect the Christian world from that danger." Father John Drinkwater (in *The Morality of Nuclear War*—Commonweal, March 18,

1955) feels that the future pattern of warfare is so clear that the Christian at this point should "refuse to co-operate in mass destructions." This refusal refers to scientists, factory workers, civil servants now as well as to soldiers, navigators, bombardiers if war should break out.

### **terms set by the world**

Certainly such analysis by the Christian conscience of what we are in, and what we are headed for is more than due. Is there no Christian ground between Communist strategic co-existence and American thermo-nuclear encirclement? Could not the Christian place himself on a third plane, neither strategic, nor thermo-nuclear, but rather spiritual? Is our Christian and prophetic mission so bankrupt that the terms are set for us by the world—the world divided into two great armed camps, both disposing of the fire plucked from heaven.

The Christian can use the time of co-existence to reject both alternatives offered him, and to create something better. This time of "cold calm" gives him the chance to hear the truth, and even tell the truth, while modern war stifles truth and substitutes the lies of war propaganda. Some of this truth does penetrate the Iron and Bamboo Curtains that encircle the world—as we know from refugees who escape to our side.

In this time of co-existence we can carry out the call of the Father of Christendom to help build "the bridge of peace," by sharing our personal goods, by working earnestly so that the economic relationships between nations will be "inspired by love." His Holiness asks not that such economic relationships be inspired by trade advantage or enlightened self-interest, or even mutual aid, but by *love*.

### **ransoming the time of co-existence**

We Americans have almost unlimited opportunity to ransom this time of co-existence for the love and service that bring peace. Our government is already channeling millions of pounds of life-giving foods through voluntary agencies (including Catholic Relief Services—NCWC) to the accessible needy and homeless of the world. Wheat flour, powdered milk, butter, vegetable shortening, are packed in small containers for speedy distribution to those for whom life is a daily struggle for existence. We can urge Congressmen to make more of these surplus products available to religious agencies who distribute



them to all in need in programs of loving service without parallel in scope.

The national awareness of the necessity of centering our thoughts on peace was proved by the appointment by our president to a new post in his cabinet—the post of presidential assistant for disarmament. In his statement the president of the United States indicated that the presidential assistant for disarmament will be expected to “weigh the views of the military, the civilians, and the officials of our Government and of other governments” on the matter of new weapons and future probabilities of armament. If this post is to be more than a useless front the views of American civilians must be made known. They were specifically asked for by the president.

Our government is presently engaged in technical assistance programs to aid underdeveloped areas in meeting their basic needs of water supply, food and fiber. Catholics play a sadly negligible role in this whole program. Now would be the time to express vocally and with personnel support our agreement with these global programs that have the seeds of charity in them. One is reminded of a nation's possibilities for good or evil by a recent dispatch from Bonn, Germany, which outlines a German plan to send technicians to aid backward nations, and in the long run to further trade with such areas.

If in 1939 Germany had sent its technical experts to share skills with more backward areas of Europe it would have found acceptance for its offerings, and even *lebensraum* for its people. Europe would have become more like a garden than the charnel house it became after Germany used its technical skill for war. Catholics seemed to play little part in shaping public opinion in regard to such concepts.

Young Americans who feel as Father John Drinkwater and so many others feel, that participation in thermo-nuclear war is against the Christian conscience, can qualify for alternative service with voluntary relief organizations by insisting to their draft boards that they are religious conscientious objectors. Their two-years' service would then not consist of criss-crossing the skies in bombers and jets, but in going about the world binding wounds, and teaching by the apostolate of their very presence, that a God of Love exists. Too many people in our anguished world know only too well that the Devil exists. Who can show them the message of the existence of God?

While we are so engaged, perhaps our Communist adversaries may attack with all available weapons. Or perhaps, goaded by small attacks, we may start the holocaust by “anticipatory retaliation” or some such

reasoning. Christians can then show forth the passion of Christ by dying in defense of His Kingdom of Love, rather than exemplify the violence of His executioners by pouring death on the innocent and guilty alike. In the meantime, by prayers and works, we can beg for a lifting of this horror of impending attack by either side.

In 1241 the Mongol armies had conquered Eastern Europe and stood at about the same position as the Communist armies stand today. They had conquered Muscovy, and had annihilated the Kingdom of Hungary. Three Polish armies fell before the hordes from the East. Duke Henry of Silesia and his forces were conquered at Liegnitz. The Christian Emperor was at enmity with the Pope, and Europe was divided and open to further attack. Instead of a crusade of arms, a crusade of prayer was offered up in all the churches of Christendom for delivery from the Tartars—who became known as Tartars because they were feared as men from the nether kingdom. Europe was on its knees. The prayers were answered in a spectacular way. A messenger came 6,000 miles from Mongolia to find Batu, the leader of the Mongol armies, to announce to him the death of the Khan of Khans. The law of Genghis Khan called for the return of the descendants of Genghis to Mongolia for the election of a new Khakan. The Mongol leaders called off the campaign and led their armies back to distant Karakorum, and Europe was left in peace.

The present co-existence gives us time for such beseeching prayers, for truth, for works of love. Perhaps our capital sin lies in the exaltation of man in the belief that only we can resolve this total crisis by the methods and weapons that we have devised.

### CO-EXISTENCE IN WESTCHESTER: *Author's Note*

"Westchester County will mobilize civil defense forces to prevent an evacuation of New York City in the event of an enemy attack, regardless of Federal recommendations to the contrary." So began an item in the *New York Times* of April 21, 1955. It seems that Westchester, the rich, residential county north of New York City, which for years of peace has been trying to stave off the hordes from neighboring New York from invading its parks, golf courses, and beaches, has been seriously worried that, in case of war, the New York refugees from atomic attack might pitch their tents on its grassy green lawns. Westchester has faced a dual problem—bad enough to have to co-exist with Russia, but to have to face unremitting years of co-existence with New York City. . . .

## book reviews

### LITURGICAL PIETY

by Rev. Louis Bouyer of the Oratory, University of Notre Dame Press, \$4.75

This is a truly excellent book. It is the work of a person of great intellectual endowments who has studied long years most fruitfully; he cannot only analyze, he can make syntheses with discernment. He has courage and is willing to take an unpopular stand, or question the worth of what has long been acceptable. His command of the language is so vital and contemporary as to be astonishing and stimulating. One makes reservations only concerning a few paragraphs on labor, work, in Chapter 19. The index could be better, but there's an acceptable Appendix on Liturgical Studies. It is the fearless aplomb with which Father Bouyer appreciates all he comes in contact with that feeds one's admiration for his work.

He is devastating in his criticism, for example, of Dom Gueranger and his *The Liturgical Year*, and the whole romantic school of liturgical revival with its sloppy scholarship and its great emphasis on Gothic architecture and Gregorian chant (and in some quarters Celtic script, Byzantine iconography, organic farming, arts and crafts, folk dancing, and wholewheat bread), and sometimes a rather *recherché* aestheticism quite beyond the interest of the "Royal Priesthood," (the laity, as differentiated from the "Ministering Priesthood," those in Orders). He gives Dom Gueranger credit for having given the liturgical movement its 19th century impetus, but he considers Dom Odo Casel much deeper and sounder, the better scholar. Among others whom he mentions with respect are Dom Lambert Beaudoin, Father Jungmann, Pius Parsch, Anton Baumstarck and Ingve Brilioth. And he is frequently appealing to *Mediator Dei*.

Father Bouyer is greatly occupied with the word—and fact—"mystery" (mysterium). His previous book, of course, was called *The Paschal Mystery*—which Father Merton said was the best book on the liturgy in 400 years. This one might be called, "Mystery in Liturgy, a Fourth Dimension."

When God calls His people, Israel, He speaks to them, and they respond to Him, and this is sealed in sacrifice; this is liturgy. The Royal Priesthood prays, offers, communicates; this is liturgy. The Mass, with its communion, sacrifice, thanksgiving and memorial, and the Divine Office is liturgy. And all this is informed by the Mystery: "... the

transitus, the passage from death to life, through the Cross to the resurrection, which was once for all accomplished in Christ . . . an action which took place in the past and can never be repeated because it is perfect . . . the Cross of Jesus . . . seen primarily as an accomplishment fulfilling His own human history and the sacred history of God's people, and finally the whole history of mankind which had been disrupted by the Fall but which by the Cross has been reconstituted and brought to an unutterably glorious conclusion by God Himself . . . the Cross also seen in the fullness of its wonderful fecundity, that is as including the resurrection of Christ, His ascension into Glory and through the Christ Who has now become *Pneuma*, life-giving spirit, the radiance of all the wonderful gifts which He has given to mankind."

In discussing the liturgy, the Mass, the Office, the priesthood, the relationship between the Christian and the world, in all these things there is this theme, the Mystery. The Mystery is the reason for the tension between Israel and the Gentiles, but it is the thing that will bring them together. It is the sign of contradiction which tells us that we have here no lasting city, but commands us never to stop building this city for love of our brother and God's glory. It tells us not to try to make a little nest here as they have tried to do in the Middle Ages, nor ". . . to accept any plan for the salvation even of the whole world which would necessitate innocent death or suffering. Precisely because he has encountered the one absolute end, which is Divine Love, he can no longer agree that any end would justify the use of perverse means. And this is what brings the Christian finally and unavoidably to the Cross, because when a man refuses to shift the burden of his plan to other men he cannot avoid taking their pain upon himself." So he obeys the New Commandment.

Father Bouyer approaches all the facets of his subject, the worship of God by men, especially in the Judaeo-Christian dispensation, and particularly as it has developed in the era since the first Maundy Thursday, with compassion and a singularly catholic comprehensiveness. He is compassionate when discussing subjects for which he has little natural sympathy, such as the Baroque spirit and contemporary "extra-liturgical" pious devotions. He makes use of all who have done good work for this worship and the understanding of it, from Freud to the Caroline Divines and modern Protestant theologians. He gives the highest praise to contemporary Anglican Evensong. Best of all, he does not see liturgy as standing in a vacuum. The decline of liturgical prayer has been going on for a thousand years for an intricate complex of reasons which are not going to be resolved in a few years. We must keep what we have and work with it; no archeologism. No sweeping away all from the past to start from scratch.

*John Stanley*



## GIFT FROM THE SEA

by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Pantheon, \$2.75

Probably all of us caught in the hectic toils of modern living have occasional dreams of "getting away from it all," but unlike Mrs. Lindbergh, few of us are actually able to do it. Even if we could manage a quiet island all to ourselves for a week or so, it's very doubtful many of us would find there the treasure she did.

In *Gift from the Sea*, the first book in eleven years by a very gifted writer, Mrs. Lindbergh goes in search of answers to the stress and conflict of life today. It is a familiar preoccupation. She sees it mainly from her own viewpoint as wife and mother, head of a large and busy household. But like all good writing, hers has something universal in it.

Alone by the sea she waits, patiently. What will it give her? Shells. She picks them up, contemplatively, gradually discovering in their varied shapes and functions symbolic meanings, the sea's real gift to her.

There they lie before her as she writes. The channelled whelk suggests simplification of life, the shedding of countless non-essentials, the striking of that delicate balance between complete acceptance of the world and complete renunciation of it. The moon shell speaks of solitude, deliberate cultivation of short periods of rest from work and society, in order to restore interior peace and unity. She defends the need to be alone, so unacceptable by current social standard, as an antidote to "torn-to-pieces-hood"—that state of mind brought about by our more mechanized, less creative, households.

One by one she considers each shell in turn, the double-sunrise, the oyster-bed, the rare and beautiful argonauta.

At the end she has pieced together a pattern, incomplete, it is true, but basically sound. On the natural plane (and she makes it clear that she is expressing no religious dogma) *Gift from the Sea* is somewhat like a small retreat. Always sensitive to spiritual values, Mrs. Lindbergh speaks to you directly, with thoughtful sincerity and wonderful grace. She is immediate, yet never argumentative or challenging. She has no glib retort to our dilemmas. This beautifully made book is small, easily and quickly read. It is hard not to quote some of its luminous bits of wisdom.

One question: What does she believe about the future life? And how much does this belief influence our philosophy of life at a given time, especially in the later years when natural motivation declines?

Still, what she has given us, unfinished by her own admission, is good. It is true. And it is beautiful.

Elizabeth Sheehan

**GOD'S MEN OF COLOR**

by Albert S. Foley, S.J., Farrar, Straus, \$4.50

This is a book which should not have needed writing, and it is a sad commentary on the understanding of the doctrine of the Mystical Body by American Catholics that it was felt necessary. In it, Father Foley writes a history of the Negro priesthood in the United States. The many men treated emerge as a typical cross-section of the priesthood: some are administrators, some teachers, some spiritual giants, some outstanding in virtue, some very human in their frailties—in short, they are just like any other priests, a point continually stressed by Father Foley. The one unusually strong characteristic that emerges from almost every biography, however, is that of perseverance. Time and again the dismal story of application and rejection by seminary after seminary is repeated. It is a great tribute to Negro Catholicism that so many men refused to be daunted and continued their efforts until they were crowned by ordination; there is no telling how many others, fully as qualified, were discouraged after two or three rebuffs, and that this could have occurred is a disgrace to the Church in the United States.

Too many lives are sketched in *God's Men of Color* for it to be possible even to list all the names here; however, note should be made of the famous Healy brothers. In *Bishop Healy, Beloved Outcaste*, published last year, Father Foley produced a full-length biography of James Healy; here his life is summarized, and those of his brothers, Alexander and Patrick. Many missionaries are included, some indeed missionaries not through their own choice, but because they could not gain admission to an American diocese; also many more order men than diocesan priests, because religious orders in general have been more hospitable to Negro vocations than have the bishops of the country.

Special mention should also be made of St. Maur's Benedictine Priory, an interracial foundation in Kentucky, of which its founder said "We don't want to do anything outstanding—we only want to do what is right." How sad that the right thing—acceptance of Negro priests on the same basis as any others—should have proved to be so outstanding that a whole book could be written about it. *Patricia McGowan*

**TENDERS OF THE FLOCK**

by Leo Trese, Sheed and Ward, \$2.50

During the last few months I have looked forward eagerly to getting *Emmanuel*, the official monthly of the Priest's Eucharistic League, and reading Father Trese's articles on different phases of the priesthood.

These articles have been combined to form *Tenders of the Flock*.

The book makes a very good examination of the ideals of the priesthood for every priest. There are chapters on the Prayerful Priest, the Sacrificing Priest, the Prudent Priest, down to the last chapter, the Ardent Priest. As retreat time draws near, one thinks of this book as an ideal one to be read on retreat. Father Trese has clear insights into the diocesan priesthood, and there is hardly a page that does not contain some helpful, practical hint for the parish priest. The author's short, crisp sentences always convey his thoughts in a light and joyful way. Nevertheless, this book does not have the power of his previous *Vessels of Clay*, nor his best book, *Many Are One*. At times, in *Tenders of the Flock*, he seems to be getting merely chatty about the priesthood. In his sincere, personal way he talks on about the priesthood seemingly making it a lovable, very human sort of profession, but failing to convey much of its real nature and depth.

There is a fine chapter on the Prayerful Priest, but here meditation seems to be a haphazard thing for the priest, without any definite method or plan. This teaching would seem to go against the great spiritual writers who hold to the necessity of a method in meditation—at least at the beginning. In one chapter Father Trese speaks of hobbies for the priest. These hobbies consist in actively interesting ourselves in some of the specialized movements in which the Church abounds. These are excellent hobbies for the priest, but I think the Holy Father would be displeased to have movements which he has considered absolutely essential for the vitality of the Church (such as the liturgical movement and Catholic Action) referred to as "hobbies."

In the chapter on the Prudent Priest, a certain priest is very easily written off by the author as a pessimist. Father Trese states, "Here is a priest apparently of somewhat melancholic disposition who thinks that most people are going to hell. I, for my part, am an incurable optimist who believes that most souls will go to heaven, ignorance and weakness being so much more common than malice." I wonder if Father Trese has considered Christ's words in Matthew VII, 13-14, and Luke XIII, 24-30. "Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who enter that way. How narrow the gate and close the way that leads to life! And few there are who find it." It may well be that the priest written off as of "melancholic disposition" is a realist.

*Tenders of the Flock* certainly is a self-examination for the priest, and in this it fulfills its purpose admirably. Yet I feel that Father Trese is not making the contribution to the priesthood—and to its understanding by the laity—of which he is capable. I look forward to another book of the same caliber as his early works. *James P. Cassidy*

**LEND ME YOUR HANDS**

by Rev. Bernard F. Meyer, M.M., Fides Publishers, \$3.50

A few days ago I chanced upon an astounding article on the editorial page of my local newspaper. The author purported to disclose a cataclysmic change in the policy of the Roman Catholic Church—a change, as he put it, from support of the status quo in world affairs to a policy emphasis on the amelioration of social and economic evils. This view is typical of the common man who sees the Church as a monolith and has not heard of Pope Leo XIII.

To combat this current indication of ignorance, I recommend *Lend Me Your Hands* by Father Bernard F. Meyer, a Maryknoll priest who has a wealth of experience in the foreign missions and in the lay apostolate. This book is almost scientific in its approach in that Father Meyer cites concrete examples and from them draws irrefutable conclusions that demand action. Inductive reasoning, I might say, has been almost anathema in writings about Catholic Action.

These example-ridden pages have been pared to the bone in order perhaps not to interfere with the message. Terse and perceptive, Father Meyer avoids the doctrinaire approach. I particularly liked the final two chapters which give a cradle-to-grave summary of modern man, from birth through adolescence to the futile isolation of adulthood.

My only criticism springs from the boring format chosen by the publishers of this important book. It seems to be axiomatic that religious books must be clothed in dull garments which bring to mind the block letters of McGuffey's Reader. I trust that the next successful book about Catholic Action will be written by a responsible layman.

*John W. Nevin*

**RETREAT FOR LAY PEOPLE**

by Ronald Knox, Sheed & Ward, \$3.00

To create a jacket design in harmony with the contents of a book is a clever feat; perhaps too often regarded as an afterthought. Reviewers rarely consider such incidentals; but in this instance it seems to me worthy of mention. The artist has conveyed the idea of a retreat through the use of a rather tranquil and bucolic green and white.

Monsignor Knox takes over from here and certainly provides us with an adequate fare of varied subjects to spark pedestrian minds. His introductory chapter sets the familiar, comfortable tone of the book. The amazing fact is that he is able to sustain it throughout without sinking to the weak or sentimental. Popularizing can certainly



play a dangerous game of tag with compromise. But Ronald Knox displays again his unusual talent for making Christians feel at home, while finding a new meaning in their faith.

As its title may suggest, *A Retreat For Lay People* is a series of meditations. Somehow, the author has bypassed many of the common and somewhat worn topics to choose the other just as important, but sometimes neglected ones.

"Our Lord's Disregard For Appearances," for one thing, seems to answer a certain need in this era of human respect and keeping up with the well-known Joneses. "The Use of God's Creatures" and "On Good Nature" fill another need in an age that still retains a slight taint of Jansenism. Here, we find a bit more of the positive than we are generally used to receiving. The heretofore formidable doctrine of detachment takes on a more pleasant, constructive nature.

This book is a welcome addition to retreat literature; we can feel only gratitude to the author.

Mary Price

### A GUIDE TO CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

by Clement Simon Mihanovich, Ph.D., Brother Gerald J. Schnepf, S.M., Ph.D., John L. Thomas, S.J., Ph.D., Bruce, \$4.50

In jest I've boasted that I could give a marriage course, so familiar am I with pamphlets, conferences, lectures and all the means which are used to prepare one for making the state happy. This book I found to be quite exhaustive in its treatment and scope. Further, it is plain to see that it's written by three men who are social scientists: it is logical, realistic, objective and intelligent. One finds no trace of bias or naivety—and this is a welcome fact, especially in a book written by those who are not married. (Only one of the authors is a married man; but all three display maturity on the subject.)

The book is scholarly, yet lucidly written. A wealth of subjects relating to marriage are covered; the ones you would expect: the honeymoon, sex, money, Church laws, legal aspects, family crisis, birth control, rhythm; and the ones you are pleasantly surprised to see treated: interracial marriage, the family and social agencies, loan companies, etc. As a former social worker I was interested in the sociological treatment of the concept of family—the changes which have taken place in the family through history as well as the cultural factors which have contributed to the development of the American family as we know it today.

This book makes for extremely interesting reading but it isn't too much fun to review; it's above question in my estimation. Here and

there I'd be inclined to take exception to an idea, but the over-all feeling I have about the book is that it is unusually good. It would be well for those who write or lecture on marriage to be as cognizant of the things which touch the subject as are these three men.

At the risk of injecting an anti-climax I'd like to add that a different type of book on marriage is still needed—one which I feel would have to be written by a Christian who is married and who is mature. Something should be said about the homely side of marriage, about things which have little meaning to those who sit on the sidelines of this state and who really don't realize what is involved in their high-sounding ideas.

Joan Gregory Franks

### NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

by Thomas Merton, Harcourt, Brace, \$3.95

In the author's own words this book is "a sequel to a previous volume called *Seeds of Contemplation*. But instead of going on from where that book left off, it goes back to cover some of the ground that was taken for granted before the earlier volume began. This book is intended to be simpler, more fundamental, and more detailed. . . . It is dedicated to the scholastics studying for the priesthood . . . who will perhaps recognize in it some notions they have received in spiritual direction."

We all benefit by the necessity to formulate more clearly that was imposed on Father Merton; the New Anti-clerical (he who insists on a separate "spirituality for the laity") will find stores for the prayer of rumination during what the author terms "ordinate work." What is offered is too rich to be taken except slowly and in small portions. Therefore the chapters are divided into numbered sections because there is a sequence in presentation of matter, though the author in his preface says that he is "Leaving systems to others and renouncing the attempt to lay down universal principles which have been exposed by better men elsewhere." He names some examples, but the well-read will recognize other books as seemingly remote as Rougemont's *Love in the Western World*, and Maritain's *Person and Society*, the existentialism of Sartre and the anguish of Kierkegaard. Thus the book is *timely* because current topics of discussion have been considered and placed in the great context comprised by God and His creatures. The book is *practical* because the processes of theoretical analysis and synthesis have been omitted and we have the assimilated form which can be applied immediately in our life of the Spirit.

Some may find the "fine phrasing" suspect—we all grow wary of

facile promises of peace of mind and soul in this paradoxical world—but from the aphorism base are worked out forceful comparisons and contrasts. The prologue has the title of the book and carries Donne on from where Hemingway left off to realize "My life represents my own allotment in the life of the whole supernatural organism to which I belong." Some may find the development of this proposition too abstract at times, but there are concrete, specific prods to point such sustained studies as: psychological conscience (consciousness) and moral conscience; right, pure, and simple intentions; work, activity, agitation; being and doing; the different vocations to perfect love. Thought and prayer and action will be stimulated by the passage where the "common good" is identified with the Holy Spirit. There is constant recurrence of what has been called *Integrity's* theme-dogma: reliance on Divine Providence. Though the author proposed to speak only of "basic verities" and has integrated dogma and ethics with sacramental theology, one wishes there were more of the Incarnation—of our life with Christ in His Mysteries.

F. A. McGowan

### THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE PRIESTHOOD

by Paul Philippe, O.P., Regnery, \$3.00

Many priests will be glad to know of this little book. Its theme is how Our Lady can form the daily life of the priest, and bring him into closer intimacy with Christ the great High Priest.

It is a small book of only eighty pages, divided into three parts. Part I considers Our Lady as the Mother of Christ the High Priest; and as the Mother of priests. Part II deals with Our Lady and the priestly Heart of Christ; and with Our Lady and the spiritual life of the priest. And Part III deals with Our Lady and the ministry of Christ the Priest; and with Our Lady and the ministry of priests.

Is the strange looking figure on the dust cover of the book meant to represent Our Lady wearing the stole of a priest? If so, isn't there some ruling forbidding representations of Our Lady wearing any priestly vestments? After all, it's only with many restrictions and precautions that the Church has allowed the title of Virgin Priest applied to Mary.

We must be on our guard against exaggerated expressions about Our Lady. On the other hand, we must avoid too great narrowness of mind in weighing the all but divine dignity of the Mother of God. Recent popes have copiously illustrated and explained much about Our Lady which is contained only obscurely and implicitly in the deposit of faith. Sound doctrine is the only basis for healthy devotion to Our Lady. The slightest tendency to turn mariology into mariolatry is do-



ing a disservice to Our Lady herself, and to the Church. Enthusiastic writers, even preachers sometimes, seem to make claims for the Blessed Virgin which should rightly only be made for God Himself. But we must never confuse the voice of enthusiasm with the authentic voice of the Church.

The translation of the book is easy to read, although sometimes perhaps too literal. On page 27 the author holds up to us Our Lady as a model of faith. Just think how much Our Lady needs her faith when her twelve-year-old Son's words are utterly beyond the understanding of His Mother! And when her Son says, "Woman, why do you trouble me with a request to do a favor?" And again when someone tells Mary's Son that His Mother is looking for Him, and He says, "Who is my Mother? Whoever does God's Will is my Mother."

On page 40 there's a hard saying that "at the moment of the Consecration, there are really two persons in us, the person of Christ who consecrates and ourselves." It needs explaining. And on page 5 the suggestion that the sanctity of Mary "surpasses the sanctity which the whole Church will have attained at the consummation of the ages," seems to overlook the fact that Mary herself is a member of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.

Priest readers will no doubt take to heart the author's words on page 23 that a mediocre goodness isn't sufficient for the suitable practice of the ministry of Holy Orders. "All this shows . . . what perfection is demanded of the priest so that he may worthily fulfill his functions." These words fortify the frightening words of St. John Chrysostom, the Doctor of the Church, who states that he sincerely thinks more priests go to hell than go to heaven.

This little book, I feel, is written out of deep love for Our Lady. No priest could read it, and think deeply about it, and not grow in love for Our Lady.

F. B.

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